



# State of Louisiana

## Department of Environmental Quality



February 4, 2003

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### For Immediate Release

### PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

(Baton Rouge) - The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) ambient air monitoring data indicates that the Louisiana Toxic Air Pollutant Ambient Air Standards for vinyl chloride and 1,3 butadiene has been exceeded at the South Scotlandville site for 2002. The South Scotlandville site is located at U.S. Highway 190 near the old Mississippi River Bridge. The impact from the emissions was confined to a small area. These concentrations do not present an imminent public health hazard. DEQ's Office of Environmental Compliance is conducting an investigation into the cause of the exceedances and will take any appropriate actions deemed necessary.

In 1990 DEQ was the first state to adopt air quality standards for toxic air pollutants. Currently only North Carolina and Louisiana have such standards which go above and beyond EPA's Air Quality Standards. The DEQ standards for the compounds are based on risks associated with long-term exposure.

Louisiana's Toxic Air Pollutant Ambient Air Standard for vinyl chloride is 0.47 ppbv and is a mean average annual concentration. The vinyl chloride data from the South Scotlandville site yielded an average annual concentration of 0.51 ppbv. Vinyl chloride, also known as chloroethene, chloroethylene, and ethylene monochloride, is a colorless, flammable gas at normal temperatures with a mild, sweet odor. It is a manufactured substance that is used to make polyvinyl chloride (PVC). PVC is used to make a variety of plastic products, including pipes, wire and cable coatings, and furniture and automobile upholstery. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has determined that vinyl chloride is a known human carcinogen. Breathing high levels of vinyl chloride for short periods of time can cause dizziness, sleepiness, unconsciousness, and at extremely high levels can cause death. Breathing vinyl chloride for long periods of time can result in permanent liver damage, immune reactions, nerve damage, and liver cancer.

The Louisiana Toxic Air Pollutant Ambient Air Standard for 1,3 butadiene is 0.42 ppbv. The data from the South Scotlandville site yielded an annual average of 0.46 ppbv. 1,3-Butadiene is a colorless gas with a mild gasoline-like odor. Sources of 1,3-butadiene include petroleum refineries and synthetic rubber manufacturers. It is also found in the exhaust of automobiles and trucks. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has determined that 1,3-butadiene may reasonably be anticipated to be a carcinogen. Breathing very high levels of 1,3-butadiene for a short time can cause central nervous system damage, blurred vision, nausea, fatigue, headache, decreased blood pressure and pulse rate, and unconsciousness. Breathing lower levels may cause irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat. Results from several studies have suggested that breathing air containing low levels of 1,3-butadiene may increase the risk of cancer. However, levels used in the studies were much higher than those typically found in the air in Baton Rouge.

DEQ operates a network of toxic air pollutant ambient air monitors throughout the state. The monitors operate by taking a continuous 24-hour sample every six days at select locations. Each calendar year, the sample data is averaged and compared to the Toxic Air Pollutant Ambient Air Standard established in the Environmental Quality Regulations. The South Scotlandville site is the only location that exceeded any of the Louisiana Ambient Air Standards for calendar year 2002.